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The Air Guard Experience

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The Air Guard Story

The whole concept of the Guard began when a group of shopkeepers, fishermen and farmers first took up their guns to defend the Massachusetts Bay Colony, way back in 1636. And citizen-soldiers have been showing their courage ever since.

They reinforced the Continental Army, and so helped win our independence during the Revolutionary War, serving under General George Washington, himself a Virginia militia officer.

In fact, those early militiamen played such a vital role in winning our freedom that the Militia Act of 1792 was written into the Constitution.

That required all states to enroll men between the ages of 18 and 44 into state militias.

Militiamen also formed a vital force during the Mexican War. And they served bravely on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line during the Civil War.

But perhaps the most important event in the Air National Guard's history took place in 1911. Because it was then that a Guardsman from the First Company, Signal Corps of New York first took to the air.

That took place just eight years after the Wright Brothers' famous flight at Kitty Hawk. And it spelled the beginning of the modern-day Air National Guard.

Four years later, the 1st Aero Company, New York, the Guard's first organized aviation unit, was called to active duty to help put an end to Pancho Villa's raids along the Mexican border.

In 1917, militia aviators enlisted in the Active Army and served during World War I.

During World War II, 4,800 men from 29 Guard observation squadrons were called to active duty. And they helped form the nucleus of what was to become the greatest Air Force in the world—the Army Air Force.

After the war, the 120th Fighter Squadron of Colorado became the first federally-recognized Air National Guard unit.

It was then that the Air National Guard units began to look like they do today. And it was then that citizen-airmen—civilians, giving two days a month to serve their country—took their place beside citizen-soldiers in defense of our nation.

In 1947, the National Security Act was passed. With that, our organization was officially named, the Air National Guard. And since then, dependence upon the Air National Guard for the security of our country, as well as individual states, has increased steadily.

Twenty-two wings with 66 tactical squadrons, for example, were called to active duty during the Korean conflict.

In 1961, more than 22,000 Air Guardsmen responded to the Berlin crisis.

During the Pueblo crisis, Air Guard units comprised more than three-fifths of America's total air power in Korea.

They also flew nearly 30,000 combat sorties during the Vietnam War.

But while our strength and readiness capabilities have made us a powerful war-time force, they also serve as a powerful deterrent to war.

And that really is the ultimate mission of the citizen-airman—to preserve peace. And to protect the people of our country, our states and our hometowns.

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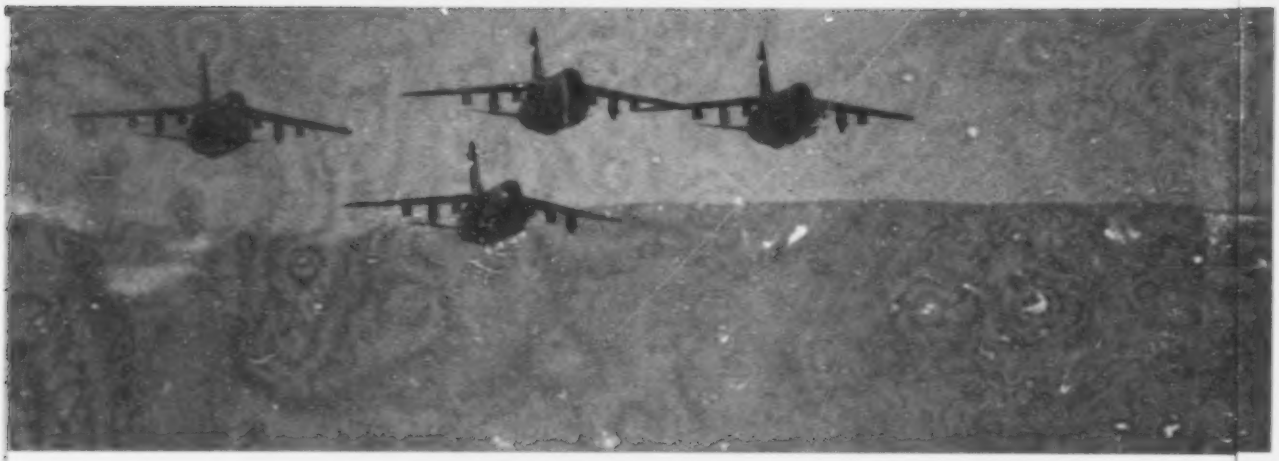

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The Air Guard's Federal Mission

The Air National Guard nd the Active Air Force are ll partners when it comes to rotecting America's skies, or rotecting America's interests broad.

In fact, the Air Guard epresents about one-third of he Air Force's total structure.

We maintain two-thirds f our nation's fighter interceptor rce and more than half of our econnaissance force.

We also provide tactical ghters, air refueling tankers, rlift, and rescue and recovery apability for our country.

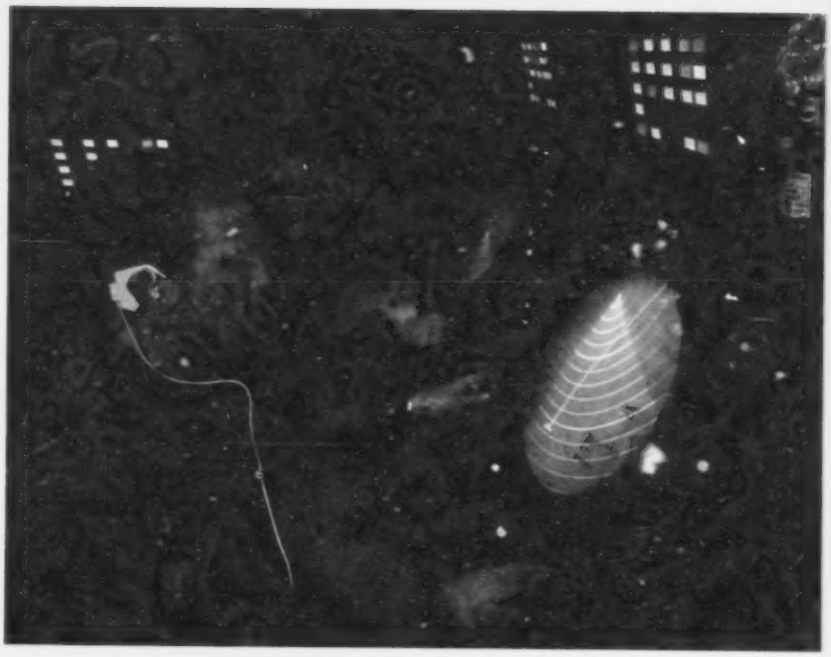
In addition, we can claim undreds of specialized mission upport units. Those are made p of tens of thousands of pecialists who never leave the round. Radar and tracking ystems specialists, communica- on systems maintenance eople, aircraft mechanics, upply personnel, security olice, cooks, munitions special- ts and many others.

Count among them, hough people and equipment comprise approximately ree-quarters of the Air Force's tal combat communication and ctical air control capabilities.

That's a tremendous sponsibility. It's also a chal- nge that the Air Guard has oven it can meet, even though ost of our members serve just vo days a month and fifteen ays a year.

We can meet that hallenge because we get the ghest level of training on the orld's most advanced tech- logy, the same training our ir Force counterparts receive.

What's more, the concept the dedicated and patriotic tizen serving part-time has abled us to do a crucial job, de by side with our Air Force unterparts.



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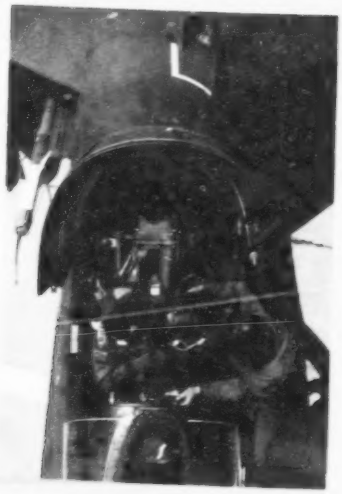

The Air Guard's State Mission

The Air Guard serves the states and local communities, as well as national interests. In this capacity, we function under the direct leadership of the governor.

While serving individual states, we've extinguished forest fires by dropping flame retardants containing fertilizers to promote growth in burned out areas.

We've flown food, clothing and medical supplies to regions isolated by flood, blizzards, hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, and tidal waves.

We've air-dropped feed to snowbound cattle. We've helped search for lost people, and have come to the rescue of ships and downed airplanes.

Down on the ground, our mission support units have provided all sorts of emergency services, including providing electrical power, illumination and medical support to areas ravaged by natural disaster.

The crisis at Mt. St. Helens is a good example. There, specialists from Air Guard units established and manned a vitally important communication network. And if it hadn't been for them, mounting a search and rescue mission would have been a nearly impossible task.

On top of everything else, the Air Guard sponsors programs to help the handicapped. We help clean up pollution. And we're involved in an on-going effort to give inner-city children desperately-needed medical care.

Basic Training

Your whole initiation into the military starts when you take the oath of enlistment. After that, you're on your way to Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas to begin your challenging and rewarding career.

You'll spend six weeks in basic training getting yourself oriented to the military way of doing things.

It's six weeks of getting used to a life of military discipline. Of getting yourself motivated to perform up to your potential. And of learning the skills it takes to be a productive member of the Air National Guard.

You'll get settled into your barracks—modern dormitories, complete with classrooms, a cafeteria, dispensary, laundry facilities and a large training area.

There's also a chapel on base. Many people go there to get away from the bustle of activity for a little while, and to do a little thinking.

Basic training is also where you get your uniforms. You'll get a physical exam there, too. You'll get a series of shots. And you'll get your hair cut.

What's more, you'll work yourself into a strict military regimen at basic training, getting up early every day, dining on three square meals a day, and working yourself into top physical shape.

You'll do that by running the confidence course, by marching and doing a lot of other physical activity.

You'll also learn how to handle a rifle, and get other training to sharpen your alertness and develop the discipline which you'll need in the Air Guard.

You'll meet your TI's, your training instructors, at basic, as well. They're very strict and expect a lot from you. But you'll understand soon enough that it's for your own good.

In fact, the physical strength and the mental toughness that they can help you develop could someday prove lifesaving in the event of a local, state or national emergency.

They're the ones who are responsible for pushing you to your physical limits.

They're responsible for helping you develop your leadership qualities.

And they're the ones who are responsible for teaching you what may be one of the most valuable lessons you'll learn in the Air Guard. That almost everything you do can be done better, can be done easier, can be done more efficiently when you do it as part of a team.

Of course, you'll get acquainted with other young people from all over the country. And with the kind of camaraderie the Guard fosters, some of them could wind up being life-long friends.

When you've finished basic training, you'll look back at all you've learned, and all the friends you've made. And you'll wonder how six weeks could have passed so quickly.

After that, there will be no looking back. You'll look forward to a new life with new skills, a new attitude and new friends in the Air National Guard.

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Technical Training

Once the initial phase of basic training is over, very likely you'll be headed to technical school. That is, unless you already have experience in your chosen career field.

But if technical school *is* in your future, you'll go to one of five Air Force Bases for training.

Sheppard AFB, Wichita Falls, Texas; Lackland AFB, San Antonio, Texas; Keesler AFB, Biloxi, Mississippi, Lowry AFB, Denver, Colorado; or Chanute AFB, Rantoul, Illinois.

Between them, they offer 1,700 courses per year in 300 different career fields, from Avionics to Armament Systems.

And of those 1,700 courses, 300 are geared specifically to the first-term Airman.

The time you spend in school is determined by your area of specialization. In fact, your training could last as little as one week. Or as long as 42 weeks.

But however long you're there, you can be sure you'll get all the instruction, and the hands-on experience it takes to do your job back at your home unit.

And do it well.

What's more, you'll get paid while you learn.

But the best part is, your Air Guard training could help you land a rewarding civilian job.

So if you think joining the Air Guard is only a great way to help protect your community, you're in for a pleasant surprise.

Because it's also a great way to become a more productive member of your community.

Professional Military Education

You can get leadership
anagement training at the
own Professional Mili-
ducation Center, in
ille, Tennessee.

It's a complete educa-
and military training
. with dormitories,
c fields and equipment,
eria, and an extensive

There are three different
ms at the PMEC. And
gram that suits you best
determined by your rank
ur career goals.

But regardless of which
m you enter, the educa-
philosophy is the same.
ld your confidence, to
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ational Guard NCO
rship School.

This course of study is
n-commissioned officers,
ants (E-4) or Staff
ants (E-5).

The curriculum is
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The program is divided
o 2-week terms. And the
umber of hours you'll
in the classroom comes to
50.

During that time, we'll
ou improve your com-
ation skills. We'll help you
p your leadership and
gement potential. And
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y history and current
ffairs.

Academy

Technical Sergeants and Master Sergeants who have high school educations, or who have passed the GED equivalent test may be eligible to attend the Air National Guard Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) Academy.

As is the case with ANG Leadership School, the instructors at the NCO Academy are all NCOs. And the curriculum is virtually the same, with instruction in communication skills, leadership and management, world affairs and military studies.

Physical training is also included in the curriculum.

In addition, the NCO Academy offers Air Guard members the option of attending one 6-week instructional program. Or dividing their time between two intensified 2-week training periods, with Guard members going to class six days per week instead of five.

What's more, graduates of the NCO Academy and the NCO Leadership School can receive college credit for these courses.

Air National Guard Academy of Military Science.

This is where men and women go to prepare to become commissioned officers in the Air National Guard.

During the six weeks they spend at the Academy, they learn what it takes to motivate people under their command.

Their time is divided between military training, where they gain experience in mobilization and deployment training, and a variety of personal development courses.

Those include courses designed to help improve basic officer skills, communication skills, and organizational ability, helping them to become better citizen-soldiers.

Altogether, the students spend almost 300 hours in the classroom over the course of their training period.

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Education through the Air Guard

The Air National Guard
s you a lot of opportunities
i it comes to getting an
ation.

You can, for example,
an Associate Degree in
ied Science from the
munity College of the Air
—a college fully accredited
e Southern Association of
ges and School's.

The CCAF is actually a
campus facility with its
nistrative center located at
well AFB, Alabama.

The various branches
cated at the different Air
technical centers. And
branch is accredited in its
cular location.

CCAF has converted
than 1,600 Air Force
es into academic subjects,
carrying college credit.

A minimum of 64
ster-hours is required to
an Associate Degree in
ied Science.

Twenty-four of them
be earned in the student's area of specialization. Twenty-one must be earned in related courses. And between six and nine must be earned in the area of management training.

We should add that not all courses need to be completed at the CCAF. Credit toward your Associate Degree may also be earned by attending various community colleges and other civilian institutions.

All of the College's programs correspond to areas for which the Air Force and Air Guard need particularly well-trained people. So, by attending CCAF, you can upgrade your crucial military specialty while earning college credit.

Those key areas are, Health Care Sciences; Aircraft and Missile Maintenance; Management and Logistics; Electronics and Telecommunications; and Public and Support Services.

Airmen are eligible to apply for CCAF after completing basic training.

Guardsmen also have an opportunity to improve their knowledge of their military specialty through ECI, the Extension Course Institute.

It offers more than 400 mail-order courses, pertaining to various military specialties. And all members of the Air National Guard are eligible to apply.

Many Guardsmen enroll in courses like auto mechanics, plumbing, electrical wiring, carpentry and other subjects simply to gain background knowledge.

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Pay, Promotions, and Special Guard Programs

It's difficult to tell you just how much money you'll earn, even when you first join the Air Guard. Because the skills you bring from civilian life, along with your education and any previous military experience, may qualify you for an advanced enlistment pay grade.

That means if you have enough college credits or ROTC training, or if you have successfully completed the Civil Air Patrol Training Program, you may be eligible to enter the Guard with a rank of Airman (E-2) or Airman 1st Class (E-3).

Normally, a new recruit enters the Guard as an Airman Basic (E-1).

Your rank will ultimately determine how much you are paid. That will hold true throughout your Guard career. So, naturally, you stand to benefit by doing what you can to be promoted.

As an Air Guard member, you may be promoted from E-1 to E-2 after completion of basic training and a total of six good months of service.

After that, you can only be promoted if you meet specific qualifications. For example, you must complete on-the-job training. You have to meet educational and time-in-grade requirements, as well.

Needless to say, the Guard encourages each recruit to strive to get ahead. So, in addition to the regular promotion system for enlisted personnel, the Air Guard offers specially qualified individuals a chance to enter the commissioning program.

If you are a qualified individual, for example, you may be eligible to enter the Air Guard's flight training program.

If selected, you first have to attend, and graduate from the Air Guard's Academy of Military Science.

Then, you'll receive your commission as a second lieutenant. And you'll move into the Air Force's pilot or navigator training program.

Pilot training takes approximately one year to complete. Navigator training takes about 33 weeks.

And after that, you'll take advanced courses that will help you master the aircraft used by your particular Air Guard unit. That part of the instruction takes between 30 days and seven months.

The Air Guard's Academy of Military Science can be a tremendous opportunity for you even if you don't want to fly. Because even if you'd rather keep your feet on the ground, you can still earn a commission as a second lieutenant in a variety of other fields.

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Guard Benefits

There are hundreds of benefits associated with being an Air Guardsman. Some of them, like a regular paycheck and training, we have already touched upon.

But you are also eligible for low-cost life insurance from Servicemans Group Life Insurance. That policy allows you to insure yourself for up to $35,000 during your entire Air Guard career for what amounts to pennies a day.

You have controlled access to military base exchanges and commissaries. And with the bargains they offer, you could expect to save as much as 20 to 25% of what you'd spend in a regular grocery store.

Guard members may also receive tuition assistance from their state.

You may also be eligible for benefits unique to your state such as the student loan repayment program or low interest educational loans.

You're entitled to medical benefits, as well. So, if you are injured or become ill during Air Guard training, you can be treated at a military medical facility.

You may also have access to base theaters, bowling alleys and other recreational facilities at military bases.

You are entitled to "space-available" travel privileges, too. That means you can fly anywhere in the continental United States. Without having to pay for an airline ticket.

The only conditions are that you must fly on a military aircraft. And there must be room for you.

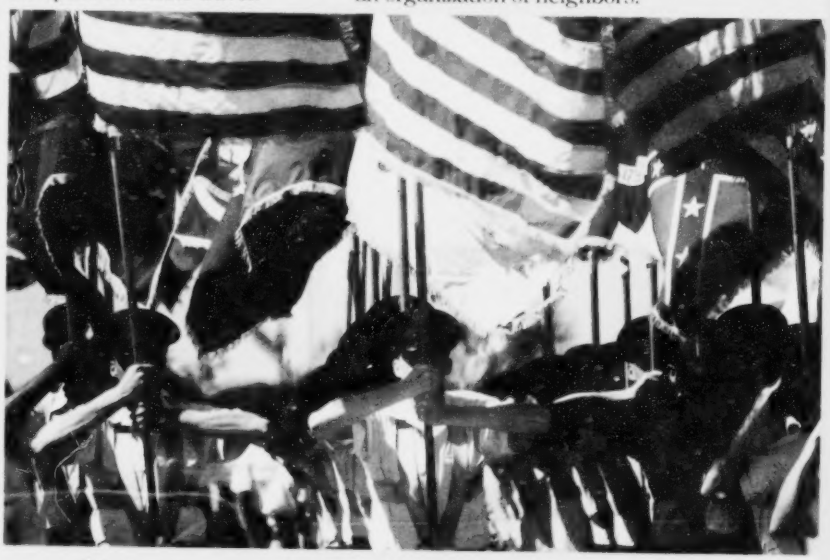
If you complete at least 20 years of satisfactory service, the Guard can provide generous retirement benefits at age 60.

Besides substantial retirement pay, you have unlimited exchange and commissary privileges. You're eligible for unrestricted membership in Officer or NCO Clubs. And you retain your eligibility for space available travel.

Or the insurance. Or any other material benefits.

The most important feature of the Air Guard may well be the camaraderie that it fosters.

You see, the Air Guard is an organization of neighbors.



What's more, you'll be able to take your family with you, overseas.

You're also eligible for certain types of legal assistance, veterinary aid and use of recreational and military clothing sales facilities.

But of all the benefits the Air Guard has to offer, the most important may not be the pay.

They live at their own homes. And most have their own civilian jobs.

But what binds them together is their extraordinary sense of patriotism, and their commitment to protect their country, state and their hometown.

And those citizens, giving a little bit extra, working part-time in the Guard, have made ours the close-knit, efficient and highly-motivated organization that it is today.

And which it has been since 1636.

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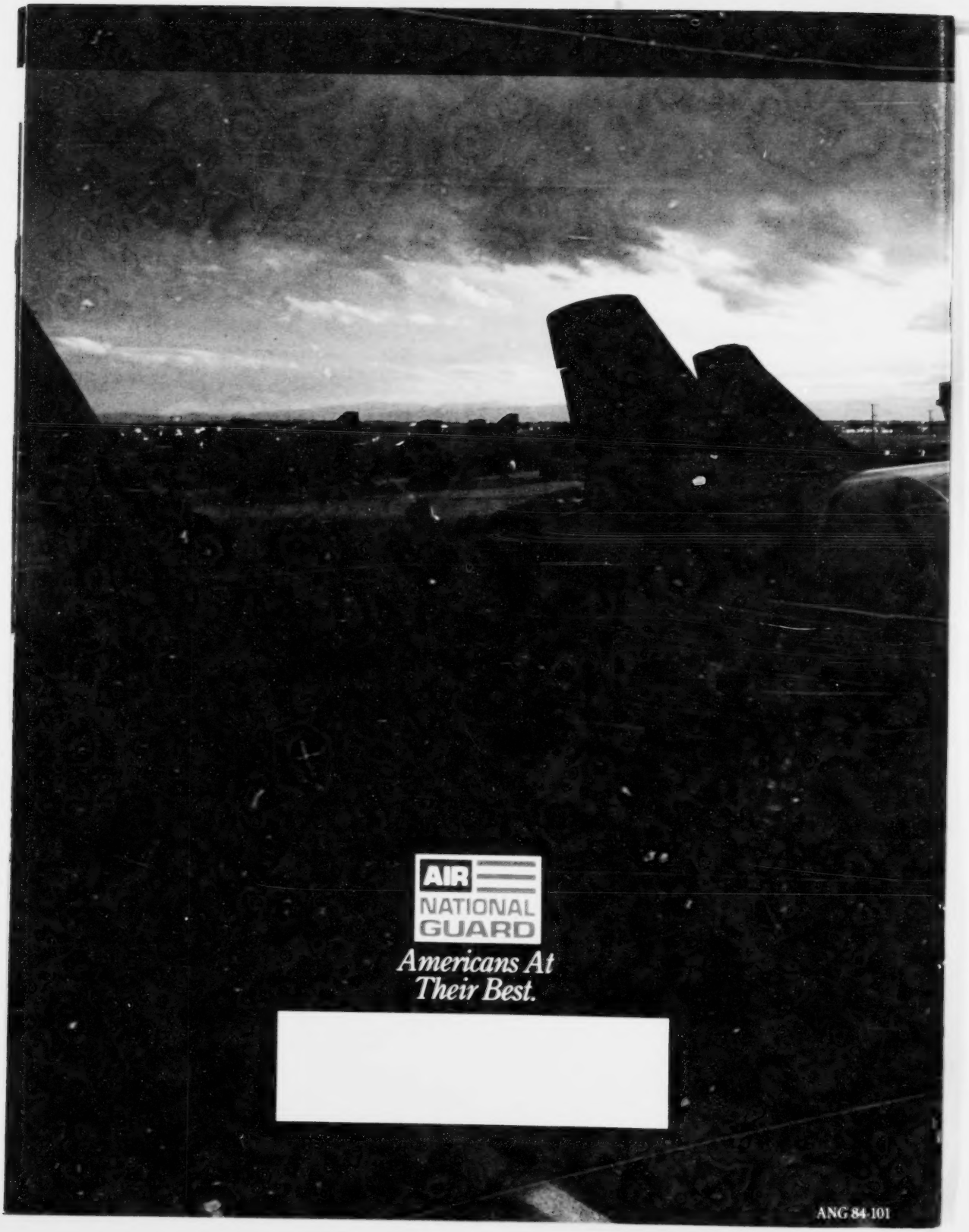
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